THE
DECLARATION
OF THE
Philadelphian Society
OF
ENGLAND,
EASTER-DAY, 1699.

Addreſſed to the Catholick Church *Repreſentative and Diffuſive.*

TO the Biſhops and Presbyters of the Catholick Church, *and to all Orders, Ranks and Degrees of the ſame, elected by God the Father, and called out of the World, being ſanctified by his Spirit: And in particular to the Churches, whether Eſtabliſhed or Diſperſed within theſe three Kingdoms, of* England, Scotland, *and* Ireland; *and yet more peculiarly to that of this Kingdom, and to all Religious Societies thereir, however they may be nominated and diſtinguiſhed, either ſeparated from it, or holding Communion with it: But in a moſt ſpecial manner, to as many as either here or abroad, do truly believe, and wait for the coming of our Lord* Jeſus Chriſt, *in the Majeſty of his Father: The* Philadelphian Society, *founded for the Propagation of Apoſtolical Faith and Love, wiſheth the increaſe of Grace, Peace and Truth.*

Fathers, Brethren and *Friends,*

§. 2. GOD having appeared in theſe latter Days, to excite and raiſe up many Perſons in all Nations, both Secretly and Publickly, after diverſe and ſundry manners, to prepare the Way of his dear *Son*; unto whom he hath given by an Oath, the utmoſt ends of the Earth for his Inheritance: Be it known unto you, that he hath Excited and Commanded us by his Spirit, which is the Teſtimony of his Son, to bear an open and publick Witneſs at this time for his *Kingdom*. Which *Kingdom* is not of this World, nor after the manner of the Nations; But is of Heaven, and from Heaven, and after the manner of the Saints in Bliſs; who are ever doing their Father's Will, and follow-

g the LAMB, who is their Light, *whithersoever he goeth.* And that this *Kingdom* may *come quickly*, according to the Oath and Covenant of the Everlasting Father, and that the Will of our God and Lord be obeyed with the same Universality, Perpetuity and Alacrity, even here upon the Earth, as it is in Heaven, to the Sanctification of his Name, *The LORD our Righteousness*; and even to a visible Inscription of it on all his Disciples: So that it may indeed be *Exalted above every Name under Heaven*, and *every Knee made to bow down to it*; we think it our bounden Duty, by all Ways and Mediums, by all Methods, Expedients and Enterprises, according to the Pattern of the Holy Ancients; with continued Labours, Watchings and Supplications, to promote, advance and carry on the Interest of the same.

§. 3. And therefore we cannot but exhort and encourage one another, and as many as with us do look for such things, to walk in all Holy Conversation and Godliness, to keep the Works of the Son of GOD unto the end, and to hold fast the Word of his Patience, until he come: Being diligent that we may be found of him in Peace and in Love, without Spot, and blameless, as was the *Primitive Church* of PHILADELPHIA. Wherefore, being mindful of the Words which were spoken before by the Holy Prophets, and of the Commandment of the Lord and Saviour, blessed for ever: As often as we do meet together for this end, we do after this manner. And as at all Times, and in all Places, we account it our highest Duty thus to do, without any Partiality or Acceptance of Persons: So especially, when we are assembled in the Spirit of the LORD, that our Loyns may not be at any time ungirt, or our Lamps extinct, and without Oil: For when the Bridegroom cometh, it will then be too late to go to buy it; and the *little Door*, which is already begun to be opened, will then be shut up.

Fathers and *Brethren*,

§. 4. Marvel not that this is a *little Door*, and that there is but a little visible Strength as yet: Since God, even our God, hath *chosen the small things of this World to confound the great, and the foolish things to confound the wise*; and that not once only, but always. As for our selves, we could have been very well contented, had it been the Will of our Father in Heaven, not to have appeared as we have done; but to have enjoyed rather in private (as some of You do) the Satisfaction of those great and august Truths, which we now confess before the whole World. It would have been far more easie for us, and would not have exposed us to so many Evils; but our Wills, which are in themselves most contrary, we have learn'd by his Spirit assisting us, to submit to his Holy and most Adorable Will.

§. 5. But notwithstanding this our more publick appearance at present, we do not hereby intend to recede from what we have formerly declared in the *Reasons for the Foundation and Promotion* of this *Society*: but do earnestly desire to keep still, and maintain the Communion of Saints inviolable, in the Band of the Holy Catholick Church.

§. 6. And for as much as it is found necessary, in order to such a near and intimate Communication with one another, as is required for the effectual Prosecuting the Great and Holy Design before us, the Interest of *Christendom*, and the Good of all *Mankind*, to initiate and admit Persons into our Society; (for that otherwise we could not be said to be a *Society*) we would not

not herein, that ye ſhould miſunderſtand us, as if we were by this, ſetting up for a new Sect, and a divided Church; our ſolemn Proteſtations to the contrary, notwithſtanding. For we have acted in this matter, and ſhall continue to act, according to thoſe moſt Catholick Principles, which all the Churches of Chriſt, that ever were or are, may juſtifie us in: We think it not our proper Buſineſs to meddle with the Controverſies, that are at this day in *Chriſtendom*; but to pray and wait for that Holy Spirit, which alone can determine them, and lead into all divine Truth. The Principles of the Chriſtian Religion we believe to be plain and eaſie, familiar and obvious, to that degree, that he that runneth may read them, in the ſacred Writings of the New Teſtament: But the Myſteries of the ſame, we believe none can truly underſtand as they ought (nor even put in Practice thoroughly, the Principles themſelves) but ſuch as are *Spiritual*; that is, Initiated by the Spirit of JESUS, into the Knowledge of them, Experimentally, Eſſentially and Fundamentally. All wrangling therefore about theſe, from the Spirit only of Reaſon, or the *natural* Man, we cannot approve as a means for the Eſtabliſhing the Unity of Faith, in the deep and recondite things of God; but do think this method moſt incongruous and ineffectual, as it hath hitherto ſhewed it ſelf to be.

§. 7. All the Precepts and Inſtitutions of our Bleſſed Maſter, we, according to their very fulleſt and utmoſt Latitude, accept, and intirely ſubmit to. The *Houſe* of our Society we have founded upon his Sermon on the Mount: Whence, though the Rain hath indeed deſcended, and the Floods came, and the Winds have blown, and beat upon this our Houſe and Eſtabliſhment, yet it falleth not: Neither can it fail, for that it is founded by the Eternal Wiſdom it ſelf upon a Rock; which Rock is Chriſt, in the Manifeſtation of his Spirit and Power.

§. 8. Wherefore the Foundation thereof, which formerly hath been declared; being as the *Hill of Zion*, that cannot be moved, and the entrance thereof as the Door of DAVID, which is never to be ſhut in the Church of *Philadelphia*: We have boldneſs to Addreſs in this Manner unto you, Men and Brethren; yea, unto you Fathers and Elders, even as many as are Separated and Sanctified, in all the Churches throughout EUROPE (and whereſoever elſe this our Declaration may be carried) for an Holy Miniſtration and Calling. And we entreat you, by the Bowels of the Lord JESUS CHRIST, whom we all profeſs to honour, and to follow, as our Leader; that ye would lay aſide all Prejudices againſt one another; all uncertain Traditions of Men, all Diſputes about Words, and all Impoſitions of Unintelligible Myſteries (though true in themſelves) and that ye would be pleaſed to make a Candid Allowance for the Power of Education in ſome, of Conſtitution in others; and of the different Apprehenſion of things (more or leſs) in all; and thence love one another as *Brethren*, and as CHRIST hath loved you, whereby ye may be able to demonſtrate your ſelves to be built (together with us) upon Him: He being the Chief Corner-Stone of this Houſe of *BROTHERLY LOVE*. Therefore ſtir up, we beſeech you, this moſt Excellent Gift, which is no leſs than the Band of Perfection in the Body of the Church, and the Firſt Born of the Love of God: So will a true *Philadelphian Society* be ſpread over the whole Earth, and the Kingdoms of the Nations become the Kingdom of the Prince of Peace.

§. 9. For the Divisions of *Christendom*, our Souls do mourn, and hence we cannot but cry out; *Sirs, ye are Brethren, why do ye Wrong one to another?* And again, we say unto you all, and every one, *how good and pleasant is it for Brethren to dwell together in Unity!* Consider then, we pray you, of the things that make for Catholick *Peace*, and for the Establishment of the new *Jerusalem*, the City and Kingdom of Peace, that so all such as have erred and are deceived, may be brought into the Way of Truth and Love, being made one Fold under one Shepherd, JESUS CHRIST, our Lord. Yea, we doubt not, Honoured and Beloved, that ye will consider of these things: And many among you will blow the Trumpet of the Lord, and sound an Alarm in the holy Congregation; to give Notice that the Lord cometh, and that his Kingdom is at Hand, to them that wait for it, and love his Appearance. And as the same Design may be carryed on after different Manners, and we have been called to this particular Manner; so we also hope and believe, that it shall be carryed on by you after various and sundry Methods, suitable to your several Stations and Calls, and according to the manifold Ministration and Dispensation of the same Spirit.

§. 10. Now, Beloved in the Lord, say not, that *the Time is not come*, as some of you have declared. For the Time verily cometh, but the Hour thereof no Man knoweth. Therefore we watch, and would awaken others to watch with us, knowing that the Promise is not afar off. *The Time indeed is not come*, as some understand it, neither is at Hand. But if *Noah* arose up, and preached Repentance, an Hundred and Twenty Years before the Completion of what he expected; if *Isaiah* preached in like manner, an Hundred and seventy Years, before it came to pass, concerning the Call and Anointing of the great CYRUS; and if the Prophet of *Bethel* preached and prophesied above Three Hundred Years before, concerning the great Reformation under *Josias*: It is not at all to be wondred at, if before so great and glorious a Reformation (or rather Transformation) of the Church, as is This, which is now expected, there be sent forth some Fore-runners, Messengers, and Heralds, to give Warning of the same to the World. This we do: And we know, that *our* Time is now; and that our Calling shall not be in vain.

§. 11. Whosoever they shall be offended at us, or at our Proceedings, without due Examination of them; we shall not be mov'd on our Parts, only with a Concern for their Good.

We have the Answer of a good Conscience before GOD, both in acting and suffering for his Names Sake; and if in any thing of lesser Moment, there hath been a Mistake committed, at any time, we shall be glad to rectifie the same, so soon as it shall be made known. If any better Expedients can be produced for the promoting of the Interest before specified, let not any with-hold them. However, we dare not consult with Flesh and Blood, in this Matter: But all things, that we can do, we are ready to do: For that we may make strait the Way of our Lord, the KING: We go forth at this Time, in his Name, to make Proclamation to the World, having received a Foretast of the Powers of the approaching New State. We are indeed, but as *a Voice in the Wilderness*; the Church of mystical *Israel*, being not yet come out of the Wilderness: But

let

let not this be rejected; for by it, shall *the Axe be laid to the Root of the Tree.* And when this Voice shall cease, then shall *the Voice of the Bridegroom be heard: Blessed are they that hear the former Voice; for they shall not be afraid to hear the latter.*

Men, Brethren, and Fathers,

§. 12. In order to a freer Prosecution of the Designs of this Society, it hath pleased God to grant us the Protection of the Civil Government: Against which, our Principles are no wise Prejudicial, but most advantagious to it, when they are understood. For it is certain, that the Blessings of the Heaven above, and of the Earth beneath, will be given by God to those wise Princes and Magistrates, who shall promote the righteous and peaceable Kingdom of CHRIST, and pay *him* the Kiss of Homage, which *He* requireth; that so they may be, *as the Light of the Morning, when the Sun riseth, even a Morning without Clouds: And as the tender Grass out of the Earth, by the clear shining* (of the Sun) *after Rain.* And we do believe, that the Time is at Hand, when the Mountains shall bring Peace, and the little Hills Righteousness unto the People. And then will it be understood, what it is to *Reign* By the Grace of God.

§. 13. But at this, Satan is extreamly enraged, seeing that his Kingdom draweth near to a Period. And therefore, by all manner of subtile Insinuations, and even by Violence, where he is not chained up, he is working incessantly to put a Stop to the breaking forth of the Golden Age of Peace and Righteousness which we Proclaim. Hence many of our Brethren, in other Countries, have been, and are despitefully used, who are as shining Lamps in a crooked and stupid Generation, to turn many to the Wisdom of the Just: Persons of the strictest Holiness, and Greatest Modesty, have not been exempted from being exposed on one Hand, to a jealous and exasperated Magistracy, and on the other Hand, to a furious and bigotted Vulgar. From hence are Imprisonments, Confiscations and Exile, for the Cause of the Testimony of JESUS, and of his Reign in Spirit, as well in Protestant as in Roman Catholick Countries. From hence also we think, are all those bitter Disputes about the Limitation of our *Love to God* (the Substance of all true Religion) which are carried on at this Day, with most extream Violence, by Persons of greatest Eminence. And all the present Controversies about the accessory Part of Christianity, to the Exclusion or Neglect of an inward Principle of divine *Life* in the Soul, which is also a Principle of divine *Light* and *Love.*

§. 14. And now, it having pleased God to put an Hook into the Nose of this Leviathan, in this Kingdom especially, it is no Wonder he teareth and rageth the more, not being able to bear the Brightness of that high Spiritual Dispensation, which is beginning here to break out, and is declared by weak Instruments elected for this purpose.

And therefore, since our first publick Appearance, he hath been ever busie to inspire some of his Agents, to raise Tumults against the Publishers of the approaching New Kingdom; and even to curse and blaspheme where we have been met together to bless God.

But, besides, these open, his Clandestine Designs are the more dangerous. Against both of which, we have been hitherto preserved by the Grace of Almighty God. And he is able, we know, to carry us through far greater Difficulties: As he-

he hath done our Fore-fathers. Whom we also believe to be no less willing, than able to assist us, and as many as are engaged in this Honourable Service.

§. 15. Whence, by the Evidence of Faith, we are assured, that he will not be wanting to give his extraordinary Attestations, as in the Days of old, so soon as the Fullness of Time shall be wholly come; and according as his Wisdom shall see expedient to raise up likewise, and inspire some great Prince, to carry on this Blessed Work. And in the mean while, we shall rest in this, that our Leader is more than an Hundred *Constantines*: And that since he hath seen fit to employ us in a *Preparatory* Work, however secret and hidden, his Measures may be for the present, yet all shall be accomplished in the End, to the Surprize and Praise of the whole Earth.

This Declaration was first published in London, *at a publick Meeting of our Society, upon* Easter-Sunday, *which was held in* Lorimers Hall; *and now printed by a general Order.*

An Additional DECLARATION.

In the Name of GOD, Amen.

IT has been the Method of the *Philadelphian* Society in general, both here and in other Countries, to Enjoy and Communicate what they have received in a more private manner; as two or three should meet together in Unity: Notwithstanding it hath pleased God of late to Impel and Constrain some of us, on account of the near approach of the Kingdom of Christ, to go forth and Proclaim it openly, which we have done now for almost these two Years: and lately in a more publick manner; whereby the Alarm has been sufficiently given and a free offer made by God of a Renew'd Dispensation of his Grace and Spirit: which has been generally despised and Rejected, and the Messengers thereof despightfully intreated. All stumbling at the Stumbling-Block, the weak and contemptible beginnings of the *Philadelphian* State; through the gradual opening of the Holy Powers at this day, and being accompanied with many weaknesses of the Instruments: Together with the great latitude of Charity and Liberty it has gone forth in; and the Contrariety of its manner to that of the present Forms and Establishments of Human Wisdom, Tradition and Custom. We have done our part; and would willingly have persisted

[illegible] all we, our Lord Jesus Christ, the First-born of the
[illegible] the Testimony of the Lord
[illegible] of his Kingdom. And now Providence having outwardly cast in a Prevention of our Meeting longer at the place where the foregoing Declaration was first Publish't, and given us pre-intimation of what we are further to do: Forasmuch, as [redacted] all were to be Admonish'd and Warn'd of the approaching day; but all are not fit to receive the Mysteries of the Kingdom, and to concur in so Spiritual a Service: Therefore at present we are to be less Publick; yet not wholly Private; but more Retired from such great Concourse of the promiscuous Multitude: to whom it hath pleased God that the Pearls of the Kingdom should be Offered, chiefly for the sake of some few among them that would know the Value of 'em; but not forc'd upon them when Rejected and Trampled on. And now we leave it to Him, to take what other Methods he sees necessary to prepare his way, Endeavouring as much as possible, to gather only a Select Company, of such as are in Unity with us, or have been excited to a Serious enquiry into these Matters, and give them a more quiet Opportunity of serving God with us; and more advantagious for the freer opening and spreading of the Powers of the Holy Spirit among us: and shall stand ready to give all Satisfaction and Information we can concerning these Divine things to any that shall come and desire it of us. And we doubt not but there will be experienced herein a Blessing of God more than ordinary both by us and all that shall come to us in good will, and due Preparation to receive it: And that the Key of *David* shall successively open, true *Philadelphian* Body will be made up.

And hence we do intreat all that are Christians indeed, and in the Bowels of Brethren, we do earnestly beseech them not to take any offence at a Name; For tho we esteem none so proper as that of Christian to express a Disciple of the Blessed JESUS, and one *Anointed* with the Spirit; yet since besides this Old Name, so many other Names have been introduced, through the great Decay of *Christian* Charity, and even almost to the utter Destruction of it: This appears the most fit to revive the same, and to denote that Spirit of Universal Love toward all that are of the same Offspring, which is the true Characteristick of that Religion which is Holy and Undefiled. Whence we Hope and Believe, that to them that are found in this Spirit this Name will not be displeasing, which as we bear, so they have a Right to bear; which is to Unite, and not to Divide; and which is an Old Name, and yet a New Name, as that Commandment whereon it is grounded, is both an Old Commandment and a New Commandment; yea, which in some sense may be said (as to the Substance of it at least) to be the *New Name* given by Christ to the Angel of the Church bearing the outward Name hereof; and even design'd and appropriated by the Holy Spirit to that blessed State of the Church, which is Typified by this of *Philadelphia*, as a Name of pure Love, freed from the oppressions of its Suffering State, and invested with Power and Dominion. Thus Answering to Christ its Head, who after his Resurrection assumes a New Name agreeable to the change of his Condition, from a State of Suffering and Dying Love, to that of Love Triumphant in its Kingdom of Power and Glory. So that indeed it is not a Name Invented and newly taken up to serve a present Design, as is generally supposed, but a Name which belongs to such as stand in Relation to this future Glorious Church:

and

waiting for it, and experiencing already in some Degree the Power of it: Which also has been Adapted to this State even by the Learned Writers themselves in several Ages.

Wherefore seeing it was never intended for a new Wall of Partition to separate Christian from Christian; If these are for *Paul*, and others for *Cephas*, we will according to the Truth of *This* Name, love them both as our Brethren; and we can do no otherwise if we are for Christ. In whom *Paul* is one with *Cephas*, and *Apollo* one with both: Yea, in whom all are One, that are Christians, not after the Letter, but after the Spirit; whose Baptism is inwardly of the Heart, and whose Faith worketh by Love; Which Covereth all things, Believeth all things, Hopeth all things, and Endureth all things, working in them according to the effectual Operation of *This* Name which he has been pleas'd to shed abroad into their Souls, as a most precious Ointment can testify. To the [illegible] who was anointed above his [illegible] the universal Spirit of Charity, [illegible] in *this* sacred Name. By which, they were Marked in the Forehead, [illegible] be known by all Men, who are his Disciples. Now, being made Partakers here by rich Grace, in some Measure, we [illegible] not rest till others of our Brethren, [illegible] are yet Strangers to it, do also come [illegible] participate of the same; together with [illegible] Name of the City of our God, the City [illegible] Peace, which is the Mother of all [illegible] Faithful: And which we believe, will [illegible] scend out of Heaven from GOD, [illegible] crown the Earth, in the last Days, with the unfadable Blessings of *Love* and *Peace* when all they that hear the Voice, which is now gone out, and keep the Word of the Son's Patience, will be made Pillars in the Temple, and will shine as fixt Stars in the Firmament of the new Heavens.

Given the 14*th of* May, *being the Day of the Opening of the Meeting of this Society in a more retired place.*

ADVERTISEMENT.

THeosophical Transactions, *by the* Philadelphian Society, *consisting of Memoirs, Conferences, Letters, Dissertations, Inquiries,* &c. *For the Advancement of* Piety *and Divine* Philosophy. *Numb.* I. II. III. IV. V. *Price* 4 s. 6 d.

The State of the Philadelphian Society, *or the Grounds of their Proceeding consi[dered]*, *price* 6 *d.*